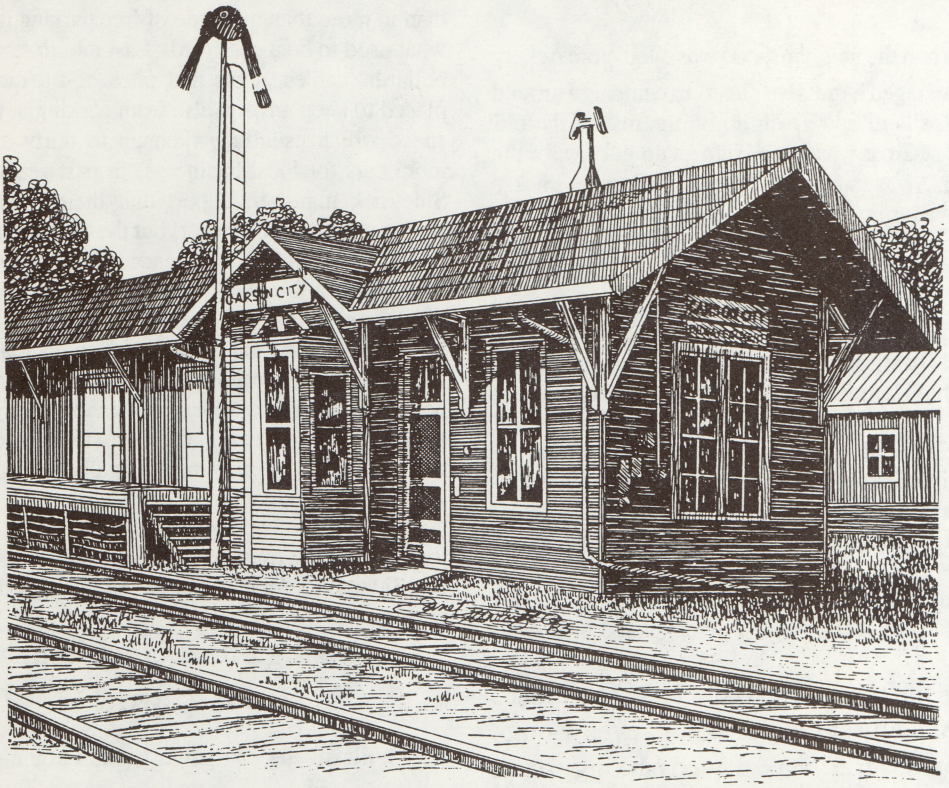
Depot Town Rag

March 1989

FREE 100% RAG CONTENT

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI



"A fine example of the country depot that embodied space for freight, passengers and the local agent was the Grand Trunk Western's building at Carson City. Painted dark red with pale yellow trim, the 1888 depot, built by the Toledo, Saginaw & Milwaukee line, was removed in August 1979." - from the Michigan Historical Society's "Bracket's & Bargeboards." Drawing by Janet Trowbridge Francouer.

Depot Town's ancient Grand Trunk caboose passed by the above depot many times before its retirement to the present siding off the original Michigan Central line in Ypsilanti.

Depot Update # 412

At the MCRR depot: A February session of the Historic District Commission saw MCRR depot owners seeking permission to continue work on their plans for a restaurant in that location. According to testimony at that meeting, excavation for the basement of the kitchen additon will begin this spring.

Along the tracks: No progress is seen yet on negotiations with Conrail for additional parking from the depot to the Michigan Ladder Company.

At the crossing: Conrail crews worked last month to install a new crossing gate on the north side of Cross Street just before River Street. No gates have yet been planned for the River Street crossings, however. And the 'walk-don't walk' signs are still not all operating, but they're in place above the newly painted cross-walks.

On the sidewalks: Detroit Edison crews replaced the streetlights from the Sidetrack to Hon's Flowers last month. They had been dark since early November.

In the parks: City officials and landscape architect, Peter Pollack, met with Depot Towners for the final go-ahead on the steps to Frog Island from the center of the north side parking lot. The $18,000 job will be started this spring and includes new planting along the embankment.

4th of July Parade heads for Depot Town

Just a month after Heritage Festival planners decided not to bring that parade into the district, the 4th of July Parade committee chose Riverside Park as the destination for its spectacular annual procession. 'Picnic in the Park' is the theme for the newest addition to this old and patriotic tradition.

"Everybody's coming back; down between the River and the Railroad Track."

Mayor appoints new Development Authority (DDA)

At the February 6 session of the Ypsilanti City Council, Mayor Murdock appointed six new members to the long defunct Depot Town Development Authority and re-appointed two former members. That group is now studying toward their organizational meeting and includes former members Gary Urick and Carolyn McKeever and new members Corrine Sikorski, Scott Sobbry, Paul Fetters, Bill French Tom Dodd and Judi Monaghan.

First items of business for the re-born group are to reorganize, determine an action calendar and to assess the present boundaries of the district. Although the DDA encompasses Riverside and Frog Island Parks, most of Depot Town and much of the property along River Street, several key properties were omitted in the formation of the district. This month may see proposals to include those left out the first time around.

DDA members' names, phone numbers and addresses are included in this issue (page 4).

Fifth visit to Ypsilanti!

ARTRAIN to return to Heritage Festival

The world's only art gallery on a train, the Michigan ARTRAIN, will makes its fifth stop in Ypsilanti this summer. A bell-weather of good times in Depot Town, the return of the ARTRAIN gives Ypsilanti one more opportunity to measure its effect on the district during its several stops along the Amtrak-Conrail siding in Ypsilanti. This August will see ARTRAIN snuggled alongside the historic Freighthouse, once more, with perhaps the easiest access and guranteed crowd they will experience in their 1989 summer season of community visits.

If the success of ARTRAIN is Ypsilanti could spread to the rest of the train's stops along their route, the national economy might take the biggest up-swing ever. Look at Ypsilanti's record:

1971 - This was one of Artrain's first stops and the neighborhood was even more rickety than the train in those days. The Ypsilanti JayCees staged a massive clean-up campaign around the depot, but just about everyone in suburban Ypsilanti had given up on the rest of the old commercial district. The former cleaners at 52 East Cross was turned into an art gallery for the occasion and a plywood sign declaring "ARTRAIN" was hung on the facade facing the tracks.

1981 - Ten years later saw a much improved train and a much improved Depot Town, sponsored by Ypsilanti Futures, Inc. The Shankwilers had since turned the "Artrain Building" into their residence and it paved the way for more middle class families to do the same. Depot Town was becoming a viable commercial/residential neighborhood once more.

1986 - Pop Art on the inside, New York subway graffiti on the outside. The opening party in the Freight House featured New York artist, Bill Blast, spray painting clothing to go with his eighty-foot gallery car design which was parked behind him. This visit was sponsored by Eastern Michigan University. Depot Town was no longer an 'iffy' place for a swank party. The Freight House dock provided a stage for one of the classiest openings ever seen around the Artrain.

1987 - 'The Cranbrook Vision' filled the interior gallery cars, while the Michigan Sesquicentennial theme was painted on the train's exterior by Depot Towners, McKeever and Dodd. This year's stop was co-sponsored by EMU and the Women's Division of the Chamber of Commerce.

1989 - Antique Toys are the theme of the current exhibtion and Heritage Festival planners see a melding of Arts & Crafts, Depot Town Antiques and other related themes to welcome our favorite train back home.

Previous workers for the Artrain visits will attest to the fact that it takes a whole lot of people to put on such a giant show at the rail siding, even though the district has improved greatly over the last several years. Paved parking, street lights, full-time businesses and heavy walking traffic are guaranteed. Now the committee needs hundreds more volunteers at our busiest time of year. Just when our City plays host to more than a quarter of a million guests, we add this enormous undertaking to the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival weekend.

Here is an opportunity for organizations and individuals to help with promotions, gallery guides, demonstrating artists and more. Call the Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce at 482-4920 to let them know your willingness to serve on board the Artrain this August 18, 19 and 20.

NOPAR KING!

Coal Yard Update:

The standoff in the private parking lot behind the Sidetrack has seen more improvements made to that lot in the last two months than in more than a decade of free parking in what used to be a coal yard. Last month saw bollards, cables, signs and piles of fill dirt placed to keep anyone else from parking in a space which usually parked up to thirty or more cars for local businesses in past years. Sidetrack managers report that their lunch business is as good as ever, but the customers complain about having to park farther away. The effect is felt by other businesses on the block as well.

North side parking behind the commercial buildings sees five lines of cars daily in the newly developed lot near Frog Island. Friday afternoon and evening continue to be the heaviest traffic, with many illegally parked vehicles along side the Freight House.

Meanwhile, talks continue between the attorneys of the former and present managers of the Sidetracks for the use of the 'coal yard' parking facility.

Is parking an election issue in Depot Town ?

With all the campaign promises going around the City this time of year, at least one candidate has mentioned he was a 'friend of business,' while another stated renewed interest in the development of south side parking.

Perhaps this is the time for individuals, property owners, regular clientele and residents voters to make their wishes known to their candidates for Mayor and City Council.

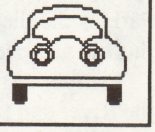
Depot Town's history has proven that the best promises are made *before* the election.

City Body
20 East Cross Street
Front end alignment
and
Collision repair

Patronize the merchants who sponsor the monthly Depot Town Rag

City Radiator
100 North River
483-2248

Ted's Auto Electric
307 North River
483-1238



Depot Town: the original small business incubator

Remember when these sponsors used to appear in these pages? Here's a flash-back of fairly recent history:

Exotica Plant Company
Rainbow Silk Screen
Charismart
The Health Emporium
Old Town Treasure
Rosemary's Corner
Depot Mailbox
Gosa's Creative Photography
Vintage Passion
Bar-Gan Auto Rental
When In Doubt, Inc.
. . . and Everything Nice
Phantom of the Attic
B & D Retail Plumbing & Heating
Jacqueline's Boutique
Something Special
Apple Harvest Weekend
Steam Excursions
J & J Plastercraft Studio
Pronto Pizza & Subs
The Deli Shoppe
Now and Then Antiques & Collectibles
The Grand Trunk, Ltd.
North River Antiques
Golden Age Showcase
The Cricket Box
The Vitamin Shoppe
Depot Town Auction Gallery
Paponetti's Pasta

Some of these loyal supporters moved on to bigger and better things. Some just moved down the street and are no longer in Depot ?Town. Some just moved on. All of them, however, participated in that unique American tradition of 'running the store.'

That small business, Mom and Pop style of enterprise continues to make it in districts around the nation. In his State of the Statemessage last month, Governor James Blanchard pointed out that Michigan employment rate is at an all-time high and fifty percent of the States' work force is in the category of 'small business.'

Depot Town continues to be a good place for new enterprises to be born -- in the association of old and more seasoned neighbors. It's a good forumula and it continues to work.

The American News Company's tradition continues at Big Bob's Magazine Emporium in Depot Town

There are folks in the neighborhood who can tell you they saw the Sidetrack's back bar being towed down the street by a horse drawn sled from a bar on Congress Street (now Michigan Avenue). And then someone else (older) will tell how that same bar used to be in an Ann Arbor establishment before that. And then the winner will tell how they knew someone (a long time ago) who knew where it came from in England originally.

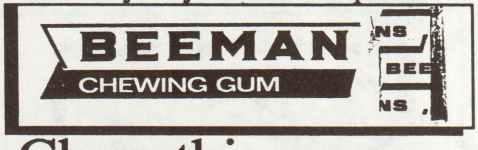
And just when you think you've heard all the old duffers' stories about what came from where and what used to be in this or that space, along comes a startlingly new revelation about the old days. And this time it comes from the president of the Ypsilanti Historical Society, Jack Miller.

Jack was commiserating with Tony Brown, owner of Big Bob's Magazine Emporium at 50 East Cross and remembering the days of World War Two when the American News Company was installed in that same space. They distributed newspapers and magazines throughout the area from that location from 1940 until 1957. Jack was helping out at his dad's Hudson dealership then and waving to the trains carrying troops out to the real world from Ypsilanti.

Jack even looked up American's previous address and found that they had started out up near the Normal College campus before moving to the railroad district. In fact, their address was up in Campus Town at 517 West Cross.

"What a coincidence," said Tony. "That's where my business was, originally called 'Phantom of the Attic,' it was moved by the previous owner, Jim Weston, and I bought it from him and changed the name."

History may well have repeated itself in this item-for-item instance.



Chew this over:

"Gimmie a package of Beeman's Pepsin Chewing Gum, please!"

Where else, but in communities like Depot Town, can you find people who still remember that old slogan?

And where else can you find people who can delightfully describe the unique tastes of the product and its related lines?

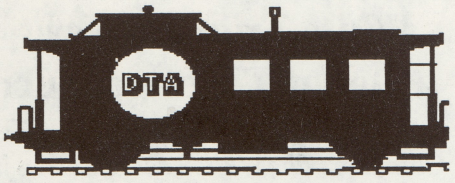
And where else can you find the real thing still for sale in the glass-topped candy counter? Beeman's, Clove and Black Jack chewing gum are staple items at J & R Trading Post at 21 East Cross Street in the Follett House.

Go ahead. Take a pack or two back to work with you after lunch. Pass them around and see who remembers the good old days. Then tell them they're still here. Down in Depot Town.

J&R TRADING POST
GENERAL STORE
"A blend of past & present,
with an eye on the future!"
21 East Cross • 483-5870

See A.P.Marshall's new book,
The
'Real McCoy'
of Ypsilanti
available at the
Ypsilanti Historical Museum
220 North Huron Street
Friday, Saturday & Sunday
2 - 4 p.m.

YPSILANTI RECYCLING PROJECT
651 Rice Street
Open every Saturday
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Collecting newspapers,
glass, used motor oil and
ferrous cans
A non-proft organization



Next month: The editor is pleased to announce that he is in Florida and didn't attend the February DTA meeting. Those minutes will be posted here next month.

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This is the month to make a commitment to the success of the business climate and quality of life in Depot Town.

There's something for everybody who wants to help create the old-fashioned feeling of COMMUNITY in historic real-life neighborhood :

The Depot Town Association is the parent group of those below, usings its tax-exempt, non-profit status to shelter many district activities, events and interests.

The Historic Depot Town Foundation is an organization of property owners who indulge in long-range planning for the district. Their most recent project was working to re-establish the DDA through the Mayor's office.

Depot Town Merchants represent managers and owners of the more-than-forty businesses on East Cross and North River Streets. Their Victorian Holiday celebrations in November and December were last year's main activity.

Depot Town Antique Engine Club enters its fourth year of activity and interest in historic gas and steam engines of all sizes. More than fifty men and women are active each month.

Depot Town Artists & Artisans keep changing their focus, the most ambitious of which was the operation of the Depot Town Art Gallery from August 1988 to February 1989. They're re-grouping now.

Depot Town Engineering Society is a group of neighborhood young people who do odd jobs for local businesses, residents and property owners. They 've gone sailing and to the State Fair together, using The Old Caboose as the focus for their informal network.

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The Depot Town Development Authority (DDA) differs from all of the above groups in that it is an arm of the City Government, appointed by the Mayor. Long dormant in the district, last month's appointments should see new action on this more 'offical' front for the neighborhood.

March 1989

Depot Towners are invited to partici-pate in any or all of the following activities for the good of this old commercial district:

Foundation
8 p.m. Thursday, 3/2
in The Old Caboose

Merchants
5:15 p.m. Thursday, 3/16
Old Town Restaurant

Association
7:30 p.m. Thursday, 3/16
in The Old Caboose

Antique Engine Club
7:00 p.m. Thursday 3/23
Freight House Coffee Shop

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving theunique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

-Tom Dodd, editor

Depot Town Association, Inc.
Jacob Guter, president
c/o The Old Caboose
400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

DDA

The Depot Town Development Authority:

(See announcement on Page one)

	Term to Expire
Corrine Sikorsky	7-1-89
312 N. River	
Scott Sobbry	7-1-89
20 E. Cross	
Gary Urick	7-1-90
539 Maple Ct.	
Paul Fetters	7-1-90
808 Young	
Carolyn McKeever	7-1-91
23 1/2 E. Cross	
Bill French	7-1-91
39 E. Cross	
Tom Dodd	7-1-92
46 E. Cross	
Judy Monaghan	7-1-92
811 Lowell	

Mayor, Peter Murdock is an ex-officio member of the Authority, as well.

Clip and mail the coupon below to become a part of one of America's most successful commercial rehabilitation efforts:

The Depot Town Association . . .

is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character and history of the Depot Town area and to ensuring the economic growth and stability of the area. **JOIN NOW!**

Help support Depot Town and recieve *The Rag* at your home.

Cut out and mail to: The Depot Town Association
c/o The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti MI 48198

Name_____ Phone_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ ZIP_____

Associate membership $10 (non-voting, mailing list, regular volunteer)
Business/Property Owner $25 (voting, office holding, work for fun)
Sustaining $100 (mailing list, heavy supporter forever!)
Please send information on sponsoring an ad in the monthly Rag.

Support the activities of this 19th Century Commercial District.

JOIN THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION

NITE CRAWLER
AUBREE'S
Call 483-1873

Aubree's Third Floor?

When Sandee and Bill French turned the second floor of the former railroad tavern-hotel into a swank, Victorian jazz room, restraunteurs around the region watched to see if the big-city plan would sell in old fashioned Ypsilanti. This winter has seen even more sophisticated handling of that unique space with the removal of the carpet and installation of a hardwood floor that new clientele will suspect was part of the original building.

This month sees the initiation of an exiting stable of musical performers in that space (listed at right) and the room holds several recent modifications for the 'new look.' Along with the regular restaurant tables are higher mini-bars, more mirrors, big-screen televisions and, underneath it all, the easier to maintain flooring.

Night Crawler instituted

That cute little red bus -- with the giant nightcrawler-worm painted on the side -- follows the traditions of caboose-waving in this old railroad district. But it's not limited to the rail line like our daily Amtraks.

You can call Aubree's Saloon (483-1873) to arrange a pick up between 8 - 11 p.m. and a return ride home from midnight to 2 a.m.

March into Aubree's

3/3 - Cicero Blake
3/4 - Skyles
3/10 - Mighty Joe Young
3/11 - TBA
3/17 - Blue Front Persuaders
3/18 - Trinidad Tripoli Steel Band
3/ 24 - TBA
3/25 - Second Floor Closed
3/31 - Jeanne and the Dreams
Every Thursday : Open Mike Nite

Ypsi Dixit

Overheard conversations on Aubree's Night Crawler as it unloaded in front of 39 East Cross Street last month:

" Oh, I didn't know there was a flower shop down here!"

" There's the Old Town! I never knew where it was until now."

(EMU's Business College recently conducted a marketing survey of the area surrounding the immediate campus. 70% of the respondents didn't know about Depot Town.)

The perfect PASTY?

Settle an old argument for us

Many who conspire to keep this old neighborhood going seem to have brought that ethic with them from Michigan's Upper Peninsula. And once the realize that common background, they begin to compare recipes for pasties.

What are the ingredients? What kind of flour? Do you put in carrots? Peas? Suet? What's the *ideal* for this unique and tasty combination?

And where can you get them 'down below?'

Send your description (or recipe) to The Old Caboose this month and we'll decide this once and for all!

WARNING: if you're not sure what a pasty is, or how to pronounce it, don't write anything. We'll explain it all next month.

Patronize the merchants who bring you the monthly
Depot Town Rag

White Triangle News
a Depot Town product

An official publication of the H.E.T. Club, Inc., *The White Traingle News* is a slick, 66-page bi-monthly magazine edited by our own Jack Miller for the Hudson, Essex and Terraplane collectors around the world.

Now in its 30th year of publication, the magazine is published at Depot Town's Standard Printing Company.

The Hudson-Essex-Terraplane Club, Inc. is an organiztion dedicated to preserving the products of the Hudson Motor Car Company of Detroit, which produced vehicles for 45 years from 1909 until May 1, 1954 and of American Motors Corporations who lproduced Hudsons from 1945 until 1957. Founded in 1959 by Meritt Marks, the Hudson-Essex-Terraplane Club is a world-wide service organization and is incorporated under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania. Membership dues for one year in the U.S. and Canada are $18 and the Club's more than forty chapters are found in four huge U.S. regions, New Zealand, South Africa, and Australia.

Recent and back issues of the WTN can be seen at both Miller Motors and Standard Printing Company.

Teachers Shop and Learning Center
15 E. Cross • Depot Town • 482-6373

Educational Resources
For Parents, Teachers and Kids. Come see our complete line, plus non-competitive games and much more!

Hansen's
STANDARD PRINTING

Business Cards • Letterhead
Envelopes • Brochures
Books • Programs • Newsletters
Weddings • Forms • Flyers

483-0339
Depot Town

Good Food

Old Town Restaurant
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
38 East Cross Street

•

Sidetrack
Good Food, Good Drinks, Good Times
56 East Cross Street
483-1053

•

Aubree's Saloon & Second Floor
39 East Cross Street

•

37 East Cross • 483-4555

OldeTowne Coin & Gold
18 East Cross
483-6155

Hon's Flowers & Fancies

46 East Cross
482-2124

RAGTIME
As comfortable as an old plaid flannel shirt
DOWN IN DEPOT TOWN

Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market
in historic Depot Town
Every Wed. & Sat.
8 a.m. — 3 p.m.

at the Ypsilanti Farmers' Market
Messina's Cheese
483-1480

Miller's Since 1940
ICE CREAM
Open All Year!
42 E. CROSS
HISTORIC DEPOT TOWN

Our Little Secret
Resale Clothing & Other Niceties
23 E. Cross Street
483-3637

YPSI FOOD COOP
Whole Natural Food In Bulk or Small Quantities
M,T,Th,F 10-7; Wed. 10-9
Sat. 9-7; Sun. 12-5
483-1520

Antiques

Jim MacDonald's Antiques & Apple Annie's Vintage Clothing
29 East Cross • 481-0555

Thompson Building Mall
Over 4000 sq. ft, of dealers
412 North River
484-4288

Something for Everyone
CROSS STREET ANTIQUES
33 East Cross Street
Antiques Bought & Sold
Hours: Tues - Sun 11-5
482-4525

We *love to* buy
Antiques
DEPOT EXHANGE ANTIQUES
54 E. Cross • 482-1780
Next to Sidetrack
Professional Stripping & Refinishing

Big Bob's Magazines
Magazines Comics Posters
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Ike's Depot Barbershop
40 East Cross Street

River Artworks
CUSTOM FRAMING
DESIGNER MATS
48 E. CROSS
DEPOT TOWN
482-8785

Depot Doo
Fine Design in Hair Style
25 East Cross Street
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